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Letter dated 19 May 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Further to our earlier letters to you concerning acts of piracy and provocation committed by the United States naval forces based in the Arabian Gulf against the wishes of the peoples of the region, I should like to inform you that such forces are continuing to engage in hostile action against vessels carrying civilian merchandise in Iraqi territorial waters and elsewhere. Intrusive United States naval patrols are intercepting these vessels and assaulting and questioning their crews. They sometimes detain vessels and crews for long periods of time, and they have in the past gone so far as to sink some of them. I present to you hereunder some examples of these practices.

1. On 15 December 2001 United States naval craft with armed soldiers on board and supported by helicopters attacked the tanker *Tulin*, which belongs to Iraqi individuals, near Mina' al-Bakr. They halted the tanker with its entire crew of 10 on board and made it drop anchor in the United States inspection zone. The crewmen were released in batches, the last of them on 15 March 2002, and were taken to Iraq on vessels heading for Umm Qasr after being held by the United States forces for periods of 50 to 60 days. On 2 February 2002 the United States forces took the vessel in tow from the inspection zone to Abu Dhabi, and on 25 March they took it under its own steam to ports in Pakistan and sold it at auction.

2. On 20 January 2002 an armed force claiming to be Australian assaulted the mechanical tender *Al-Abid*, which was loaded with flour, near buoy 5 in the Khawr Abd Allah waterway inside Iraqi territorial waters. They proceeded to search the tender, interrogate the master and assault the crew. The encroachment lasted for half an hour and then they left the tender.

3. On 23 January 2002 two United States rubber boats approached the entrance to the Shatt al-Arab channel accompanied by a United States military helicopter. The two boats manoeuvred in the Jumaylah area near the entrance to the Shatt al-Arab. The helicopter then headed towards buoy 5 at the entrance to the Khawr Abd Allah channel. After an hour the two boats and the helicopter withdrew towards the United States frigate on station in the waters of the Gulf.

The assaults by the United States on vessels carrying civilian merchandise in the Arabian Gulf and its sinking or sale of some such vessels are acts of aggression and terrorism that endanger the movement of civilian shipping in the Arabian Gulf. They are incompatible with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the international norms governing the safety of maritime

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navigation, and the United States of America bears full legal responsibility for them. Iraq affirms its right, in accordance with the principle of international responsibility, to seek compensation for the damage sustained by it or by its nationals as a result of the criminal acts being committed by United States forces against ships in the Arabian Gulf region.

We urge you to intervene in order to prevent acts of aggression and terrorism by the United States that are in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, public international law and international humanitarian law.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mohammed A. **Al-Douri**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative